

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OTTAWA 01318 102343Z

16

ACTION EUR-12

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DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, VN, CA

SUBJ: CANADIAN GOVERNMENT VIEWS ON VIETNAM SITUATION

REF: OTTAWA 1309

1. SUMMARY:. CANADIAN FOREIGN MINISTER HAS BEEN PRESSED IN PARLIAMENT RE CANADIAN POSITION ON COMMUNIST AGGRESSION IN VIETNAM. END SUMMARY.

2. PARAGRAPH 3 OF REFTEL QUOTED CANADIAN FONMIN ALLAN MACEACHEN IN HOUSE OF COMMONS AS EXPRESSING CANADIAN GOVERNMENT VIEW RE SITUATION IN VIETNAM. OVER PAST SEVERAL DAYS SUBJECT HAS BEEN RAISED REPEATEDLY IN PARLIAMENT AND FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHT OF THOSE EXCHANGES.

3. ON APRIL 7 MP OTTO JELINEK ASKED IF CANADA HAD SENT A FORMAL OR INFORMAL PROTEST TO NORTH VIETNAM CONCERNING HOSTILITIES AFFECTING THE CIVILIAN POPULACE.

FONMIN MACEACHEN REPLIED "I HAVE NOT MADE A PROTEST OR DENOUNCED THE SITUATION AS SUCH BUT HAVE MADE THE COMMENT THAT A MAJOR MILITARY OFFENSIVE IS UNDER WAY

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PAGE 02 OTTAWA 01318 102343Z

AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA DEPLORES THIS FACT

AND PARTICULARLY THE EFFECT THE OFFENSIVE IS HAVING
ON SO MANY INNOCENT CIVILIANS IN THE AREA."

4. MP ELDON WOLLIAMS THEN ASKED WHETHER THE
GOVERNMENT HAD MADE A FORMAL PROTEST THROUGH UN
CHANNELS, AND MR. MACEACHEN REPLIED "...WE HAVE
MADE NO FORMAL PROTEST. WE CERTAINLY SUPPORT THE
ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION IN RESPECT OF THE HUMAN
ASPECT RECENTLY MADE BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL...
WE ARE SEEKING... TO TAKE A CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN
THE HUMANITARIAN FIELD AND COME TO THE ASSISTANCE...
OF THE INNOCENT CIVILIANS INVOLVED. THAT APPEARS TO
BE THE PROPER ROLE FOR CANADA WHICH AT THE PRESENT
TIME HAS NO EFFECTIVE POLITICAL ROLE WHICH IT CAN PLAY
IN THE SITUATION EXCEPT TO URGE THE PARTIES TO CEASE
HOSTILITIES..."

5. ON APRIL 8, MR. JOHN REYNOLDS PROPOSED A MOTION
AS FOLLOWS: "THAT THIS HOUSE URGE THE SECRETARY OF
STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS TO INSTRUCT CANADA'S
DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVE IN NORTH VIETNAM, JOHN SMALL,
TO LODGE A FORMAL PROTEST WITH THE NORTH VIETNAMESE
GOVERNMENT AGAINST ITS ACTIVE AGRESSION IN SOUTH
VIETNAM AND ITS FAILURE TO RESPECT THE CEASE-FIRE AND
OTHER AGREEMENTS AIMED AT RECONCILING THE DIFFERENCES
IN SOUTH EAST ASIA." UNANIMOUS CONSENT WAS NECESSARY
FOR THE MOTION AND IT WAS NOT RPT NOT CARRIED. SUBSEQUENTLY,
MP WOOLLIAMS PURSUED THE MATTER BY DIRECTING FURTHER
QUESTIONS AT FONMIN MACEACHEN. AFTER CITING THE
GOVERNMENT RESOLUTION APPROVED IN 1973 CONDEMNING
THE USBOMBINB IN NORTH VIETNAM, WOOLLIAMS ASKED
"...CAN THE MINISTER SAY -- IN VIEW OF THE KILLING
OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN AND THE GREAT INHUMANITY BEING
PERPETRATED AT PRESENT -- IF HE WOULD CONSIDER HIS
POSITION AND PUT FORWARD A GOVERNMENT RESOLUTION
CONDEMNING THE COMMUNIST AGGRESSION THAT IS GOING ON
NOW?" MACEACHEN REPLIED BY SAYING THAT HE SAW
NO ANALOGY BETWEEN THE TWO SITUATIONS AND BY SAYING
THAT THE WORDS HE HAD USED WITH RESPECT TO THE CURRENT
COMMUNIST OFFENSIVE WERE "PRECISELY THE WORDS THAT
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PAGE 03 OTTAWA 01318 102343Z

WERE USED IN THE RESOLUTION..."

6. WOOLLIAMS PRESSED WITH FURTHER QUESTIONS REGARDING
CANADIAN INTENTIONS TO PROTEST FORMALLY THE MILITARY AGGRESSION,
AND MR. MACEACHEN REPLIED "...IN DECIDING WHAT... TO DO...
ONE OUGHT TO UNDERSTAND CLEARLY THE PURPOSE, THE EFFECT
AND THE WORTHWHILENESS OF ANY PARTICULAR ACTION. I AM
QUITE SATISFIED THAT OUTRIGHT DENUNCIATION SUCH AS IS

SUGGESTED... WOULD DO NOTHING TO RELIEVE THE HUMAN
SUFFERING WHICH IS AT THE PRESENT TIME THE MAIN CANADIAN
CONCERN... ANOTHER OBLIGATION WHICH MUST BE DISCHARGED...
CONCERNS THE WELFARE OF CANADIAN CITIZENS NOW IN
TERRITORIES CONTROLLED BY THE PRG...".
PORTER

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